

September 8, 2011

Re: Dismantling of Public Education

Dear Governor Snyder and Legislators,

The government of Michigan is shirking its responsibility to the people of Michigan with the package of education reform bills introduced September 7, 2011. Under the guise of "parental choice," our legislature is sacrificing the state's children at the altar of the free market, forcing the most vulnerable to compete on an unlevel playing field. We are witnessing nothing less than the dismantling of public education, piece by piece.

In low-performing districts, those parents with the transportation, money, time, and ability can choose to send their child to a school outside of their community. But what about the children who will be left behind, whose parents may not have the means or may not care? By its Darwinian actions, including lack of adequate funding for public schools, our legislature is dooming these children—and their schools—to failure, with little hope for the future. Whatever happened to championing the common good? In case you need a refresher course, here's the definition from a Michigan Department of Education resource, *Helping Teachers Teach and Children Learn*, under "Core Values of American Constitutional Democracy":

***Common Good** The public or common good requires that individual citizens have the commitment and motivation—that they accept their obligation—to promote the welfare of the community and to work together with other members for the greater benefit of all.*

Prosperity will continue to elude Michigan until social and economic justice prevails for *all* of her people, not just the fortunate few.

Sincerely,

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Michigan Citizens Advocating for Public Education (MI-CAPE)

Mission Statement:

Michigan Citizens Advocating for Public Education (MI-CAPE) is a community-based, nonpartisan, grass-roots effort that seeks to help shape education policy in Michigan by engaging community members, educators, legislators, and business leaders in thoughtful and constructive dialogue. It is our desire to build bridges between all stakeholders in public education and find solutions that will improve and strengthen our schools. We advocate for: high standards of education for our children, pre-K-12; the employment of highly qualified teachers, staff, and administrators; a source of stable, sustainable, predictable funding; the right to maintain local control over our community schools; and support from the state board of education to implement best practices in education.

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